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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALMATY 000538

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CACEN (JMUDGE), DRL/PHD (PDAVIES)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/10/2015

TAGS: [KZ](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [POLITICAL](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: EUR DAS KENNEDY'S MEETING WITH FM

TOKAYEV

REF: A. ALMATY 347

[¶](#)B. ALMATY 342

Classified By: Ambassador John Ordway, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: Kazakhstani Foreign Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev hosted a working lunch on February 4 for EUR DAS Kennedy, accompanied by Ambassador Ordway. Tokayev's comments after the recent flurry of law enforcement visits to USAID implementing partners tracked with those of other senior Kazakhstani officials -- Soros is welcome but democracy NGOs remain suspect. Like other highly placed figures, the FM also described the legal action against political party Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DCK) as not "final." DAS Kennedy warned that the uncertain status of certification could jeopardize IMET training. Tokayev pledged continued support for the OSCE budget. Recent Caspian delimitation talks and relations with Russia were also discussed. End Summary.

Soros and NGOs

[¶](#)2. (C) FM Tokayev hosted a working lunch for DAS Kennedy which was attended by Deputy FM Aleksey Volkov, MFA Americas Office Director Jandos Asanov, and Astana PO. DAS Kennedy reaffirmed U.S. interest in maintaining a broad and deep relationship with Kazakhstan. However, the criminal investigation of the Soros Foundation and the law enforcement raids on democracy NGO offices had recently consumed substantial time and attention. NGOs with U.S. funding, DAS Kennedy emphasized, were expressly prohibited from funding political parties.

[¶](#)3. (C) FM Tokayev denied that a political motive was at work in the Soros case. As for the NGOs, Astana had questions about these organizations and their activities, especially NDI. Ambassador explained that NDI Kazakhstan had not funded the travel of local students to Ukraine in December. NDI's interest, he continued, had merely been to provide the experience of election observing to the students. The Embassy, he added, had sent a letter to MFA with these and other details.

No Orange Revolution Here

[¶](#)4. (C) Unlike Uzbekistan's President Karimov, the FM maintained that Astana is confident that the Orange Revolution is unlikely to be replicated in Kazakhstan. President Nazarbayev, he said, is committed to political reform and bringing the central executive power into balance with the other branches and levels of government. Nazarbayev's vision included direct elections of local akims and greater responsibility at the district level. Stability, however, will remain the core guiding principle of the country's reform program.

DCK Case Not "Final"

[¶](#)5. (C) Echoing recent comments of other senior officials (reflets), Tokayev said that the court action to "liquidate" opposition party DCK was not "final." He cautioned, however, that the case had a strong legal basis and should not be politicized. The FM argued that Kazakhstan's record on respect for democracy was still high and that the country was moving in the right direction. The pace and the path of reform, though, would be dictated by Kazakhstan's needs.

[¶](#)6. (C) DAS Kennedy hoped that a less drastic approach than liquidation could be found. Ambassador observed that DCK had a following and the party's continued existence provided an important outlet for this constituency.

Certification

[¶](#)7. (C) DAS Kennedy briefed Tokayev on the state of play over this year's certification process and the danger that IMET training could be disrupted -- an outcome she wanted to

avoid. The FM responded that he needed to consult within the government. He expressed concern that a decision not to certify could create the "wrong" political impression.

Support for the OSCE Budget

¶18. (C) DAS Kennedy welcomed Kazakhstan's aspirations to lead the OSCE. At the same time she emphasized the importance of demonstrating commitment to all OSCE principles and to its

institutions. The attack on the OSCE's budget had threatened to gut the organization. Tokayev assured her that despite Kazakhstan's criticism of the OSCE, there was no question of jeopardizing the OSCE's budget. Astana's attitude toward the OSCE was positive overall. Kazakhstan would match last year's \$800,000 contribution with a \$1 million payment in ¶2005.

Caspian De-limitation

¶19. (C) Tokayev reported that Kazakhstan's bilateral negotiations at the recent Caspian delimitation talks, particularly with Russia, were moving in the right direction. Russia, he said, finally seemed to recognize that the boundary could not simply be drawn down the middle of the Caspian. Turkmenistan and Iran, however, continued to play the spoilers on the multi-lateral negotiations.

Russia

¶10. (C) Ambassador asked where policy authority on CIS countries rested in Moscow. The FM remarked that power on these issues had shifted to the presidential administration to a degree not seen during the Yeltsin years. Tokayev relayed the pessimism of Chairman of the CIS Executive Committee Vladimir Rushaylo, who had told the FM that the CIS was in great danger of dissolving. Such an event, Tokayev commented, would be seen as a major policy failure on Putin's watch.

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